

using legal remedies in disputes with non-tribal owners of land within reservations.

Finally, the bill represents a dramatic departure from our commitment to support for the arts and the humanities. It cuts funding of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities so deeply as to jeopardize their capacity to keep providing the cultural, educational, and artistic programs that enrich America's communities large and small.

For these reasons and others my Administration has conveyed to the Congress in earlier communications, I cannot accept this bill. It does not reflect my priorities or the values of the American people. I urge the Congress to send me a bill that truly serves the interests of our Nation and our citizens.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 18, 1995.

**Message to the House of
Representatives Returning Without
Approval the Department of
Veterans Affairs and Housing and
Urban Development, and
Independent Agencies
Appropriations Act, 1996**

December 18, 1995

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2099, the "Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996."

H.R. 2099 would threaten public health and the environment, end programs that are helping communities help themselves, close the door on college for thousands of young people, and leave veterans seeking medical care with fewer treatment options.

The bill includes no funds for the highly successful National Service program. If such funding were eliminated, the bill would cost nearly 50,000 young Americans the opportunity to help their community, through AmeriCorps, to address vital local needs such as health care, crime prevention, and education while earning a monetary award to help them pursue additional education or

training. I will not sign any version of this appropriations bill that does not restore funds for this vital program.

This bill includes a 22 percent cut in requested funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including a 25 percent cut in enforcement that would cripple EPA efforts to enforce laws against polluters. Particularly objectionable are the bill's 25 percent cut in Superfund, which would continue to expose hundreds of thousands of citizens to dangerous chemicals and cuts, which would hamper efforts to train workers in hazardous waste cleanup.

In addition to severe funding cuts for EPA, the bill also includes legislative riders that were tacked onto the bill without any hearings or adequate public input, including one that would prevent EPA from exercising its authority under the Clean Water Act to prevent wetlands losses.

I am concerned about the bill's \$762 million reduction to my request for funds that would go directly to States and needy cities for clean water and drinking water needs, such as assistance to clean up Boston Harbor. I also object to cuts the Congress has made in environmental technology, the climate change action plan, and other environmental programs.

The bill would reduce funding for the Council for Environmental Quality by more than half. Such a reduction would severely hamper the Council's ability to provide me with advice on environmental policy and carry out its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The bill provides no new funding for the Community Development Financial Institutions program, an important initiative for bringing credit and growth to communities long left behind.

While the bill provides spending authority for several important initiatives of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including Community Development Block Grants, homeless assistance and the sale of HUD-owned properties, it lacks funding for others. For example, the bill provides no funds to support economic development initiatives; it has insufficient funds for incremental rental vouchers; and it cuts nearly in half my request for tearing

down the most severely distressed housing projects. Also, the bill contains harmful riders that would transfer HUD's Fair Housing activities to the Justice Department and eliminate Federal preferences in the section 8, tenant-based program.

The bill provides less than I requested for the medical care of this Nation's veterans. It includes significant restrictions on funding for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that appear designed to impede him from carrying out his duties as an advocate for veterans. Further, the bill does not provide necessary funding for VA hospital construction.

For these reasons and others my Administration has conveyed to the Congress in earlier communications, I cannot accept this bill. This bill does not reflect the values that Americans hold dear. I urge the Congress to send me an appropriations bill for these important priorities that truly serves the American people.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
December 18, 1995.

**Remarks on Signing the
Memorandum on Federal Arrestee
Drug Testing and an Exchange With
Reporters**

December 18, 1995

The President. I want to welcome the Attorney General, United States Attorneys Eric Holder of Washington, DC, and Kathryn Landreth of Nevada; the Attorney General of Minnesota, Skip Humphrey; District Attorney Lynne Abraham of Philadelphia; District Attorney Michael Barnes of South Bend, Indiana, who is president of the National District Attorneys Association; and Jeremy Travis of the National Institute of Justice. I thank all of them for joining me here today.

I am about to sign a directive to the Attorney General instructing her to take the next step in our administration's all-out effort to break the cycle of crime and drugs.

The criminal justice systems of our country are overburdened with drug-abusing defendants who cycle through the system while continuing to use drugs. Far too many criminals brought into our system have a substance

abuse problem. In fact, a 1993 study by the Justice Department found that more than half of the arrestees tested positive for an illicit substance. Unless we break the cycle of drugs and crime, criminal addicts will end up back on the street, committing more crimes and then right back in the criminal justice system still hooked on drugs. That's not fair to the taxpayers, the crime victims, or the American public. The cycle must be broken.

All across our country employers have accepted responsibility to reduce the level of drug use in the workplace. Teachers and coaches have accepted the responsibility to reduce the level of drug use in our schools. Now it is time for agencies in our criminal justice system to use all their power to reduce drug use by Federal arrestees.

With this directive, when you enter the Federal criminal justice system, you will be tested. If you have been taking drugs, you should suffer the consequences. The administration is committed to breaking this link between crime and drugs. Indeed, if we could break it, we could dramatically lower the crime rate.

As a nation, there is only one message we can send: Continued drug use is unacceptable. We can't have a comprehensive crime-fighting effort until we end drug offenders' habits. That's why it's critical that the criminal justice system put all its power behind cleaning up drug-abusing criminals.

This directive is another example in which the Federal criminal justice system can serve as a model for States. I'm very honored to be joined by the Minnesota Attorney General, Mr. Humphrey, and the District Attorneys of Philadelphia and South Bend, Indiana. When they leave here today they're going home to ask their State legislatures to follow our lead in making sure all offenders are drug-tested. I call upon every Governor, every State assembly, every State attorney general to do the same.

I'm proud of our antidrug strategy. It combines tough enforcement with a real, comprehensive prevention program and more investment in treatment. This directive is another step in our efforts to eliminate illegal drug use.